



# Kongeriget Danmark

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**A flexible unbonded pipe and a method for producing such pipe****TECHNICAL FIELD**

- 5 The present invention relates to a flexible unbonded pipe and a process for its preparation. The flexible unbonded pipe is particularly useful in aggressive environments, due to its ability to withstand the diffusion of gases from a fluid in the pipe.

10 **BACKGROUND ART**

- Flexible unbonded pipes as such are well known in the art. Such pipes comprise an inner liner which forms a barrier against the outflow of the fluid which is conveyed through the pipe, and one or more armouring layers on the outer side of the inner liner (Outer armouring layer(s)). The flexible pipe may comprise additional layers such as one or more inner armour layers to prevent the collapse of the inner liner. Such inner armouring layer or layers are normally referred to as a carcass. An outer sheath may be provided with the object of forming a barrier against the ingress of fluids from the pipe surroundings to the armour layers.

Typical unbonded flexible pipes are e.g. disclosed in WO0161232A1, US 6123114 and US 6085799.

- 25 The term "unbonded" means in this text that at least two of the layers including the armouring layers and polymer layers are not bonded to each other. In practice the pipe will comprise at least two armouring layers, which are not bonded to each other directly or indirectly via other layers along the pipe. Thereby the pipe becomes bendable and sufficiently flexible to roll up for transportation.

- 35 The above-mentioned type of flexible pipes is used, among other things, for off shore as well as some on-shore applications for the transport of fluids and gases. Flexible pipes can e.g. be used for the transportation of fluids where very high or varying water pressure exists along the longitudinal axis of the

FLEX PA0302 DK

2

pipe, such as riser pipes which extend from the seabed up to an installation on or near the surface of the sea, pipes for transportation of liquid and gases between installations, pipes which are located at great depths on the seabed, or between installations near the surface of the sea.

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In traditional flexible pipes, the one or more outer armouring layers are most often in the form of helically wound steel wires e.g. shaped as profiles, where the individual layers may be wound at different winding angle relative to the pipe axis.

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When using such prior art flexible pipes for transportation of aggressive gases, raw oils and similar fluids, it has been found that undesired and often corrosive gases and liquids are diffusing through the inner liner and into the outer armouring layers.

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In prior art pipes, this problem has been solved in a number of different ways. In EP 1119684 a solution is disclosed where the lumen between an inner liner and an outer sheath can be flushed to remove undesired gases and liquids that has been diffusing through the inner liner into the lumen.

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This solution is however not suitable in all situations.

Another approach for preventing the aggressive and destructive corrosion of the armour wires is to provide armour wires of a non-corrosive material. Such solution has been disclosed in WO 02095281, wherein the armouring wires are made from a composite material. Such wires are however relatively expensive.

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In WO0231394 it is suggested to allow environmental sea water to come into contact with the outer armour layers whereby gases and liquids that have been diffusing through the inner liner are flushed away from the armours. As the sea water may be corrosive in itself, this solution either requires that the armour wires are of a non-corrosive material or that the pipe is used in low corrosive outer environments.

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US 6006788 discloses a flexible pipe with an internal gas proof undulating metal tube. However, this pipe is relatively stiff as the internal gas proof undulating metal tube needs to have a certain thickness in order to be sufficiently stable. Furthermore, the internal gas proof metal tube need to be  
5 resistive to the medium to be transported in the pipe, which in practice means that pipes of this type have a very limited used.

### SUMMARY OF INVENTION

10 The objective of the invention is to provide a flexible, unbonded pipe useful for transportation of gases and crude oils and other aggressive fluids, which pipe is improved compared with the respective prior art pipes. In particular, it is an objective to provide a flexible, unbonded pipe which does not have the drawbacks of the prior art pipes described above.

15 The invention also aims at providing a method for producing such flexible, unbonded pipes.

20 These objectives have been solved by the invention as it is defined in the claims and described in the following.

The flexible pipe according to the invention can thus be used for transporting corrosive gases, crude oils and other corrosive fluids, with less tendency for corrosion of the armouring wires than prior art solutions as disclosed above.  
25

Simultaneously, the construction is very simple and easy to produce, and furthermore the corrosion stability properties obtained are not at the expense of flexibility properties of the flexible pipe.

30 According to the invention the flexible pipe according to the invention has an increased corrosion stability due to the fact that the diffusion of aggressive fluids into the armouring wires is reduced or even eliminated while the flexible pipe remains sufficiently flexible for being transported on reels.

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4

**DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION**

The flexible pipe according to the invention thus comprises at least one polymer layer and one film layer, said polymer layer being bonded to said film layer.

Generally, it is desired that the film layer is thinner than said polymer layer, and that said film layer furthermore provides a higher diffusion barrier to the fluids in question, i.e. the gasses or liquids to be transported in the pipe.

The polymer layer may in principle be any kind of polymer layer.

In one embodiment, it is desired that the polymer layer is capable of resisting the high temperatures of the fluid conveyed e.g. in the order of 130°C to 150°C, or even in the order of 130°C to 180°C, and which is easy to work industrially, in particular by extrusion. The polymeric materials that have these properties include in particular certain semi-crystalline polymers. Furthermore, it is desired that the polymer layer should be resistant to live crude with little or no blistering or swelling.

Examples of useful polymers for the polymer layers include the following:

polyolefins, such as polyethylene and poly propylene;  
polyamide, such as poly amide-imide, polyamide-11 (PA-11) and polyamide-12 (PA-12);  
polyimide (PI);  
polyurethanes;  
polyureas;  
polyesters;  
polyacetals;  
polyethers, such as polyether sulphone (PES);  
polyoxides;  
polysulfides, such as polyphenylene sulphide (PPS);  
polysulphones, such as polyarylsulphone (PAS);  
polyacrylates;

FLEX PA0302 DK

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- polyethylene terephthalate (PET);  
polyether-ether-ketones (PEEK);  
polyvinyls;  
polyacrylonitrils;
- 5 polyetherketoneketone (PEKK); and co-polymers of the preceding;  
fluorous polymers such as polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), homopolymers  
and copolymers of vinylidene fluoride ("VF2 "), homopolymers and  
copolymers of trifluoroethylene ("VF3 "), copolymers and terpolymers  
comprising two or more different members selected from the group
- 10 consisting of VF2, VF3, chlorotrifluoroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene,  
hexafluoropropene, and hexafluoroethylene.

- The flexible pipe of the invention may thus preferably comprise at least 50 %  
by weight, such as at least 70 % by weight, such as at least 85 % by weight
- 15 of one or more of the polymers selected from the group of polymers  
specified.

- In one embodiment, the polymer layer comprises one or more of polyamide,  
poly(vinylidene fluoride) (PVDF).
- 20

- In one embodiment, the polymer layer comprises at least 50 % by weight,  
such as at least 85 % by weight of cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE). In one  
embodiment, the polymer layer consisting essentially of cross-linked  
polyethylene (XLPE) and one or more inorganic fillers.
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The polymer layer may preferably be as in the co-pending application  
PCT/DK 03/00191, which is cross-linked using IR radiation. The disclosure of  
PCT/DK 03/00191 is hereby incorporated by reference.

- 30 The film layer may in principle be a film of any type of material which,  
preferably in the desired thickness e.g. less than 2 mm or even less than 1  
mm, is flexible.

- Useful film layers include materials of the group consisting of polymer, metal,  
35 metal containing compositions and combinations thereof.

FLEX PA0302 DK

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Useful polymer materials for the film include Inter alia polymer film comprising one or more of the polymer material selected from the group consisting of

- polyolefins, such as polyethylene and poly propylene;
- 5 polyamide, such as poly amide-imide, polyamide-11 (PA-11); polyamide-12 (PA-12) and polyamide-6 (PA-6);
- polyimide (PI);
- polyurethanes;
- polyureas;
- 10 polyesters;
- polyacetals;
- polyethers, such as polyether sulphone (PES);
- polyoxides;
- polysulfides, such as polyphenylene sulphide (PPS);
- 15 polysulphones, such as polyarylsulphone (PAS);
- polyacrylates;
- polyethylene terephthalate (PET);
- polyether-ether-ketones (PEEK);
- polyvinyls;
- 20 polyacrylonitrils;
- polyetherketoneketone (PEKK); and polymers of the preceding;
- fluorous polymers such as polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), homopolymers and copolymers of vinylidene fluoride ("VF2 "), homopolymers and copolymers of trifluoroethylene ("VF3 "), copolymers and terpolymers
- 25 comprising two or more different members selected from the group consisting of VF2, VF3, chlorotrifluoroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropene, and hexafluoroethylene.

- 30 In one embodiment, the film layer is made from metal e.g. in the form of a metal film such as a film comprising or consisting of aluminum, stainless steel and/or duplex.

In one embodiment, the film layer is a layered material. The layered film may e.g. be composed of a metal layer and a primer layer, wherein the primer

FLEX PA0302 DK

7

preferably may be a layer comprising C atoms. This aspect will be described further below.

5 In one embodiment, the layered film comprises at least one metal layer, such as two, such as three metal layers. The film layer may optionally comprise one or more polymeric layers.

10 In one embodiment, the film layer may comprise metal containing compositions, such as metal oxides and metal halides. When using such material the film layer should preferably be a layered material so that the metal oxides and metal halides are protected from contact with corrosive fluids.

15 The film layer may in one embodiment be a mixture of polymer with carbon and/or metal and/or metal containing particles.

20 In order to minimize the risk of forming gas pockets in the interfacial area of the combined polymer layer and film layer, these layers are bonded to each other. The bonding may in principle be provided by any means provided it is sufficiently strong to avoid the creation of interfacial gas pockets.

25 In one embodiment, the polymer layer is bonded to the film layer via one or more bondings from the group of physical bondings and chemical bondings, such as ion bondings and covalent bondings.

In one embodiment, it is desired that the bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is stronger than the internal bondings in one of the polymer layer and the film layer.

30 This property may be measured by a peel test for tearing the film and the polymer layer from each other. e.g. using ASTM D3330.

35 When performing the peel test it is in one embodiment desired that the bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is so strong that the combined film/tape is not only separated along its interfacial layers, but that



FLEX PA0302 DK

8

the material of at least one of the layers is torn up, or in other words that at least one of the layers has cohesion failure under the load applied during the peel test.

- 5 In one embodiment, the combined film/tape has a peel strength using ASTM D3330 of at least 300 N/m, such as at least 500 N/m, such as at least 700 N/m.

- 10 In one embodiment, where the film layer in itself is a layered material, e.g. of two, three or four individual polymer, metal or other layers, all interface bondings including bondings between layers of the film and bondings between the polymer layer and the film layer, are stronger than the internal bondings in one of the polymer layer and the film layer. The individual layers may e.g. be glued or pressed together, or the bonding may be obtained by
- 15 subjecting the polymeric layer to heat to softening or even melting point. As another alternative the individual layers may be sprayed or brushed e.g. in the form of a solution or dispersion in a solvent, which solvent afterwards is allowed to evaporate.

- 20 In one embodiment, the interface bondings(s) between the one or more layers is/are stronger than the internal bonding of the polymer layer.

- In one embodiment, the interfacial bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is sufficiently strong to prevent creation of gas pockets between
- 25 the layers when subjected to an increased carbon dioxides pressure on the film side of the pipe, the increased carbon dioxides partial pressure e.g. being 1 bar, 5 bars 10, bars or even 50 bars.

- The bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer may e.g. be
- 30 sufficiently strong to prevent creation of gas pockets between the layers when subjected to an increased pressure on the film side of the pipe, where the pressure is 5 bar, 10 bars 50, bars or even 100 bars or higher, and where the gas comprises at least 10% by vol. of methane, at least 10% by vol. of hydrogen sulphides, and at least 10% by vol. of carbon dioxides.

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In one embodiment, it is desired that the film layer or at least the surface of the film that is facing the polymer layer comprises C atoms. Thereby an improved adhesion between the film layer and the polymer layer may be obtained, in particular if the polymer layer is subjected to a cross-linking step after being applied face to face with the film layer, because this cross-linking step may provide covalent bondings between the polymer layer and the C atoms of the film layer.

In one embodiment, the surface of the film facing the polymer layer comprises a primer. This primer may in principle be any type of primer that facilitates a satisfactory bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer. The primer may e.g. be a C atom containing primer.

Thus, in one embodiment the film or the film with a primer comprises C atoms, and the polymer is a cross-linked polymer with bondings linking to the C atoms of the film.

The optimal primer depends largely on the film layer material. Examples of useful primers include latex primers (UCAR™ Latex by DOW, Latex Metal Primer – DTM by Hytech), epoxy primers (EP420 PRIMER GREEN by AEROCENTER AIRCRAFT SUPPLY and AVIONICS), ascrylat/methacrylat primers, Rusty Metal Primer by Rustoleum, Metal-Prime by Hytech, Anti-rust primer by Plascon International Ltd, MPI #23 Surface Tolerant Metal Primer by Bennette paint.

The primer may for example be applied by spraying gluing and/or pressing. Alternatively the primer may be a plasma deposited layer.

The thickness of the polymer layer should preferably be in the interval of 4 to 25 mm. A too thin layer may have too low mechanical strength, whereas a too thick polymer layer may result in reduced flexibility of the final unbonded pipe. In general, it is thus desired that the polymer layer has a thickness of at least 4 mm, such as at least 6 mm, such as at least 8 mm, such as at least 10 mm, such as at least 12 mm, and preferably the polymer layer has a thickness between 4 and 20 mm, such as between 8 and 15 mm.

FLEX PA0302 DK

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For maintaining high flexibility while having low gas permeability, it is desired that the polymer layer is thicker than the film layer, such as 4 times as thick or more, such as 10 times as thick or more, such as 50 times as thick or more, such as up to 100 times as thick.

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Desired thickness of the film layer is therefore in general less than 4mm. The film layer may thus e.g. have a thickness of about 25  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 100  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 500  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 1 mm or less.

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In one embodiment, the film is in the form of a tape wound onto the pipe, where the term "tape" includes thin films of 1 mm or less and with a width of up to 10 cm.

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As indicated above, it is desired that the major gas barrier is provided with the film layer. In one embodiment, the film layer is the innermost layer of said film layer and said polymer layer. Since the film layer has a low or no gas permeability to the gases methane, hydrogen sulphides, carbon dioxides, the polymer layer is protected from these gases and the requirements to the chemically stability of the polymer layer is low compared with prior art polymer inner liners.

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By having a high barrier against the aggressive gases in the innermost layer which is thereby in direct contact with the fluid to be transported in the pipe, focus can be put on other properties when choosing the material for the polymer layer.

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In an alternative embodiment, the polymer layer is the innermost layer which is thereby in direct contact with the fluid to be transported in the pipe. The film layer is thus partly protected from the aggressive fluids to be transported in the pipe. In this embodiment, in order to have an acceptable lifetime the polymer layer should preferably have a high chemical resistance.

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The film layer preferably has a higher diffusion barrier to methane, hydrogen sulphides, carbon dioxides and water than the polymer layer.

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FLEX PA0302 DK

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In one embodiment, the film layer provides a fluid permeation barrier against one or more and preferably all of the fluids methane, hydrogen sulphides, carbon dioxides and water, which is higher, such as least 50 % higher, such as least 100 % higher, such as least 500 % higher, such as least 1000 % higher, than the fluid permeation barrier provided by the polymer layer determined at 50 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

In one embodiment, the film layer is essentially impermeable to one or more of the fluids hydrogen sulphides, methane and carbon dioxide, at a partial pressure for the respective fluids on the first side of the layer of 0.03 bars or more, such as 0.1 bars or more, such as 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more measured at about 50 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

In one embodiment, the film layer is essentially impermeable to H<sub>2</sub>O (preferably liquid or gas), and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

In one embodiment, the film layer is essentially impermeable to hydrogen sulphides at a partial pressure of 0.03 bars or more, such as 0.1 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

In one embodiment, the film layer is essentially impermeable to methane at a partial pressure of 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

In one embodiment, the film layer is essentially impermeable to carbon dioxide, at a partial pressure of 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

FLEX PA0302 DK

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In one embodiment, the film layer is sandwiched between two polymer layers. It is in this embodiment desired that at least one of the polymer layers is bonded to the film layer with a bonding that is stronger than the internal cohesion of said polymer layer.

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At least one of the polymer layers in the sandwich structure and preferably both, independently of each other, are of a polymer selected from the group as specified above.

- 10 In one sandwich structure embodiment, the innermost polymer layer of the two polymer layers is PVDF and the polymer layer on the in radial direction outermost of the two polymer layer is cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE). In another alternative embodiment, the innermost polymer layer of the two polymer layers is cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE).

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The tape may e.g. be a wound or folded tape, e.g. wound or folded directly on a carcass or wound or folded onto an innermost polymer layer.

- 20 The flexible unbonded pipe may e.g. comprise one or more innermost unbonded armouring layers normally referred to as a carcass. Such carcass is preferably a metallic carcass and is normally fluid pervious. In one embodiment, the carcass is of wound interlocked profiles.

- 25 The flexible unbonded pipe of the invention comprises an inner liner which forms a barrier against the outflow of the fluid which is conveyed through the pipe, and one or more armouring layers on the outer side of the inner liner (Outer armouring layer(s)). The flexible pipe may comprise additional layers such as one or more inner armour layers to prevent the collapse of the inner liner. Such inner armouring layer or layers are normally referred to as a
- 30 carcass. An outer sheath may be provided with the object of forming a barrier against the ingress of fluids from the pipe surroundings to the armour layers cover layer and one or more intermediate layers. At least one of said inner liners, intermediate layers and outer sheath is in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above.

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FLEX PA0302 DK

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The armour layers on the outer side of the inner liner may e.g. be of a composite material e.g. as disclosed in WO 02095281. Alternatively the armour layers may be of metal profiles helically wound e.g. as disclosed in WO 0036324 and WO0181809.

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In one embodiment, the flexible tubular pipe of the invention comprises at least one inner liner in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above and at least one armouring layer which is not bonded to the combined polymer/film layer.

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In one embodiment, the pipe is of the type comprising at least, from the interior towards the exterior, an internal non-impervious metal carcass, an inner liner, a set of layers of reinforcement wires, and an external protection sheath, at least one of said inner liners, intermediate layers and outer sheath being in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above.

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The one or more outer armouring layers may preferably be in the form of helically wound steel wires e.g. shaped as profiles, where the individual layers may be wound at different winding angle relative to the pipe axis.

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In one embodiment, the flexible pipe comprises, from the inside to the outside, a body consisting of an interlocked steel tape, an inner liner in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above, at least one pressure armouring consisting of interlocked wires spirally wound with a small pitch (e.g. a winding at an angle in relation to the axis of the pipe of about 85°), at least one layer of traction armour wires spirally wound with a long pitch (e.g. a winding at an angle in relation to the axis of the pipe of about 35°). This configuration is referred to as rough bore.

25

In another embodiment, the flexible pipe comprises an inner liner in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above, a first armouring mainly withstanding the pressure generated by the fluid in the internal sheath, generally referred to as pressure layer, possibly a second armour essentially withstanding the traction produced notably by the pressure of the fluid. This variant is referred to as smooth bore.

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FLEX PA0302 DK

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In a further embodiment, the flexible pipe comprises an inner liner in the form of a combined polymer/film layer as described above, an armouring (outer armouring) placed above the inner liner, both withstanding longitudinal tensile stresses and the circumferential component due to the inside pressure of the fluid. Such a pressure armouring can comprise two layers of reverse-pitch spiral wires whose armouring angles are close to 55° in relation to the axis of the pipe. The stresses due to the inside pressure are in this case taken up by these layers.

10 The invention also relates to a method of producing a flexible unbonded pipe comprising the steps of providing at least one polymer layer and at least one film layer and bonding said layers to each other.

The layers polymer layer and film layer may be bonded as disclosed above.

15 The method according to the invention preferably comprises the steps of

-providing an innermost polymer layer, preferably around a mandrel or an inner armour layer (carcass), more preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,

20 -providing a film layer around said innermost polymer layer, preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,

25 -providing a second polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and

-providing a bonding between at least one of said polymer layers and said film layer, said bonding preferably being provided by subjecting said at least one polymer layer to cross-linking.

30 In this method a sandwich structure as disclosed above is produced.

In a variation thereof, the method according to the invention comprises the steps of

FLEX PA0302 DK

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- providing a film layer around a mandrel or an inner armour layer (carcass), preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,
  - providing a polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and
  - providing a bonding between said polymer layers and the film, said bonding preferably being provided by cross-linking of the polymer layer.
- 10 In yet another variation thereof, the method according to the invention comprises the steps of
- providing the innermost layered section of the flexible pipe comprising at least an innermost polymer layer and an armour layer on the outer side of said innermost polymer layer,
  - providing a film layer around said innermost layered section of the flexible pipe, preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,
  - providing an outer polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and
  - providing a bonding between at least one of said polymer layers and the film, said bonding preferably being provided by subjecting said polymer layer to cross-linking.

The film may be as disclosed above. In one embodiment, it is desired that the film e.g. the metallic film is treated by corona or by application of a primer for increasing bonding, said primer preferably being applied using CVD, spraying, dipping and/or rolling. Thereby an improved adhesion between the polymer layer and the film layer can be obtained.

For additional adhesion it is desired that the film or a primer coated onto said film comprises C atoms, thereby covalent bondings can be provided when subjecting the polymer layer to cross-linking.



FLEX PA0302 DK

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The primer may be as disclosed above.

The polymer layer to be cross-linked may preferably be as in the co pending application PCT/DK 03/00191, and may therefore preferably be subjected to cross-linking using IR radiation.

In one embodiment, it is thus desired that at least one polymer layer is cross-linked after being applied in contact with the film, which film preferably comprises C-atoms.

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### EXAMPLES

#### Example 1

A self-interlocking carcass of 6" inner diameter (15.2 cm) is produced. The outer diameter of this steel carcass is approximately 16.7 cm. Onto the carcass a tape consisting of a 0.1 mm thick steel coated with an acrylat/methacrylat primer is wound. The tape has a width of 5 cm and is wound with an overlap of about 4 mm.

20

Onto the tape a polymer layer in the form of a polyethylene is extruded. The carcass with tape is fed into the centre of a crosshead tool. In this tool, the polyethylene melt is distributed in a pipe type tool and upon the exit of the crosshead is drawn onto the carcass with tape in approx. 6 mm thickness at a line speed of 0.48 to 0.55 meters/minute.

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The extruder is a conventional polyethylene single screw extruder with a 120 mm screw diameter and an L/D ratio of 30, with a standard screw. The extrusion process is found not to be temperature sensitive. The temperature setting on the heating zones of the extruder and head ranges from 150 to 165°C, and melt temperature is typically 160°C.

30

The polyethylene is a mixture of 90% HD-PE, grade 5621 from Basell and 10% UHW-PE powder, grade HE 2591 from Borealis. The additives are a mixture of 0.45% DYBP from Degussa and 0.40% Irganox XP621 from Ciba. DYBP (2,5-dimethyl hexine-3, 2,5-di-t-butyl peroxide) is the peroxide which

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FLEX PA0302 DK

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induces cross-linking of the PE. DYBP is activated by Infrared radiation (DYBP may also be activated by heat at 180°C, thus the temperature in the extruder should not at any time exceed 175°C). Irganox is an antioxidant. The material is fed into the extruder as a premix.

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After the extrusion the pipe passes through an IR oven with a capacity of 75 kW. Residence time in the oven is 30-60 seconds.

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After this the carcass with inner liner is cooled with water and led through a caterpillar.

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Thereafter a pressure armouring consisting of interlocked wires was spirally wound with a small pitch and a traction armour wire spirally wound with a long pitch, and finally the pipe was coated with an outer sheet provided by extrusion.

#### Example 2

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A pipe is produced as in example 1 with the difference that a film as disclosed in example 1 is provided onto the traction armour wires and that the outer sheath is a 6 mm polyethylene as disclosed in example 1 and that the polyethylene of the outer sheath is subjected to an irradiation after the extrusion thereof.

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#### Example 3

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A pipe is produced as in example 1 with the difference that a polymer layer of PVDF is applied by extrusion directly onto the carcass and that the film is wound onto the PVDF layer.

FLEX PA0302 DK

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**CLAIMS**

1. A flexible unbonded pipe comprising at least one polymer layer and one film layer, said polymer layer being bonded to said film layer.
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2. A flexible pipe according to claim 1 wherein the polymer layer comprises at least 50 % by weight, such as at least 70 % by weight, such as at least 85 % by weight of one or more of the polymers selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, such as polyethylene and poly propylene; polyamide, such as poly amide-imide, polyamide-11 (PA-11) and polyamide-12 (PA-12); polyimide (PI); polyurethanes; polyureas; polyesters; polyacetals; polyethers, such as polyether sulphone (PES); polyoxides; polysulfides, such as polyphenylene sulphide (PPS); polysulphones, such as polyarylsulphone (PAS); polyacrylates; polyethylene terephthalate (PET); 10 polyether-ether-ketones (PEEK); polyvinyls; polyacrylonitrils; polyetherketoneketone (PEKK); copolymers of the preceding; fluorous polymers such as polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), homopolymers and copolymers of vinylidene fluoride ("VF2 "), homopolymers and copolymers of trifluoroethylene ("VF3 "), copolymers and terpolymers comprising two or 15 more different members selected from the group consisting of VF2, VF3, chlorotrifluoroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropene, and hexafluoroethylene.
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3. A flexible pipe according to claim 1 wherein the polymer layer is cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE).
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4. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 1 and 2 wherein the film layer is selected from materials of the group consisting of polymer, metal, metal containing compositions and combinations thereof.
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5. A flexible pipe according to claim 4 wherein the film layer is a polymer film comprising one or more of the polymer material selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, such as polyethylene and poly propylene; polyamide, such as poly amide-imide, polyamide-11 (PA-11), polyamide-12 (PA-12 and polyamide-6 (PA-6)); polyimide (PI); polyurethanes; polyureas; 35

FLEX PA0302 DK

19

- polyesters; polyacetals; polyethers, such as polyether sulphone (PES); polyoxides; polysulfides, such as polyphenylene sulphide (PPS); polysulphones, such as polyarylsulphone (PAS); polyacrylates; polyethylene terephthalate (PET); polyether-ether-ketones (PEEK); polyvinyls; 5 polyacrylonitrils; polyetherketoneketone (PEKK); copolymers of the preceding; fluorous polymers such as polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), homopolymers and copolymers of vinylidene fluoride ("VF2 "), homopolymers and copolymers of trifluoroethylene ("VF3 "), copolymers and 10 terpolymers comprising two or more different members selected from the group consisting of VF2, VF3, chlorotrifluoroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropene, and hexafluoroethylene.
6. A flexible pipe according to claim 4 wherein the film layer is a metal film preferably selected from the group consisting of aluminum, stainless steel 15 and duplex.
7. A flexible offshore pipe according to claim 4 wherein the film layer is a layered material comprising at least one metal layer, such as two, such as 20 three metal layers, the film layer optionally comprising one or more polymeric layers.
8. A flexible pipe according to claim 4 wherein the film layer comprises metal containing compositions, preferably selected from the group consisting of 25 metal oxides and metal halides.
9. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 4-8 wherein the film layer comprises a mixture of polymer with carbon and/or metal and/or metal containing particles.
- 30 10. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the polymer layer is bonded to the film layer via one or more bondings from the group of chemical bondings and physical bondings.

FLEX PA0302 DK

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11. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the polymer layer is bonded to the film layer via one or more bondings including at least one of the chemical bondings, ion bondings and covalent bondings.
- 5 12. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is stronger than the internal bondings in one of the polymer layer and the film layer.
- 10 13. A flexible pipe according to claim 12 wherein the film layer is a layered material, all interface bondings including bondings between layers of the film and bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer, are stronger than the internal bondings in one of the polymer layer and the film layer.
- 15 14. A flexible pipe according to claims 12 or 13 wherein the interface bonding(s) is/are stronger than the internal bonding of the polymer layer.
- 20 15. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the interfacial bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is sufficiently strong to prevent creation of gas pockets between the layers when subjected to an increased carbon dioxides pressure on the film side of the pipe, the increased carbon dioxides pressure e.g. being 1 bar, 5 bars 10, bars or even 50 bars.
- 25 16. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer has a peel strength using ASTM D3330 of at least 300 N/m, such as at least 500 N/m, such as at least 700 N/m.
- 30 17. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the bonding between the polymer layer and the film layer is stronger than the cohesive forces in one of the polymer layer and the film layer measured by 90 ° peel test.
- 35 18. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the surface of the film facing the polymer layer comprises a primer, said primer

FLEX PA0302 DK

21

preferably being selected from the group consisting of a plasma deposited layer, a polymer layer added by spraying gluing and/or pressing,

19. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the polymer layer has a thickness of at least 4 mm, such as at least 6 mm, such as at least 8 mm, such as at least 10 mm, such as at least 12 mm, preferably the polymer layer has a thickness between 4 and 20 mm, such as between 8 and 15 mm.

20. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the polymer layer is thicker than the film layer, such as 4 times as thick or more, such as 10 times as thick or more such as 10 times as thick or more, such as 50 times as thick or more, such as up to 100 times as thick.

21. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the film layer has a thickness of about 25  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 100  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 500  $\mu\text{m}$  or more, such as about 1 mm or less.

22. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the film layer provides a fluid permeation barrier against one or more of the fluids methane, hydrogen sulphides, carbon dioxides and water, which is higher, such as least 50 % higher, such as least 100 % higher, such as least 500 % higher, such as least 1000 % higher, than the fluid permeation barrier provided by the polymer layer determined at 50 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

23. A flexible pipe according to claim 22 wherein the film layer provides a fluid permeation barrier against all of the fluids methane, hydrogen sulphides, carbon dioxides and water, which is higher, such as least 50 % higher, such as least 100 % higher, such as least 500 % higher, such as least 1000 % higher, than the fluid permeation barrier provided by the polymer layer determined at 50 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

24. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 22 and 23 wherein the film layer is essentially impermeable to one or more of the fluids hydrogen

FLEX PA0302 OK

22

sulphides, methane and carbon dioxide, at a partial pressure for the respective fluids on the first side of the layer of 0.03 bars or more, such as 0.1 bars or more, such as 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more measured at about 50 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

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25. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 22 and 23 wherein the film layer is essentially impermeable to H<sub>2</sub>O (preferably liquid or gas), and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

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26. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 22-25 wherein the film layer is essentially impermeable to hydrogen sulphides at a partial pressure of 0.03 bars or more, such as 0.1 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

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27. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 22-26 wherein the film layer is essentially impermeable to methane at a partial pressure of 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

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28. A flexible pipe according to any one of the claims 22-27 wherein the film layer is essentially impermeable to carbon dioxide, at a partial pressure of 1 bar or more, such as 10 bars or more at a temperature of about 25 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 50 °C, preferably at a temperature of about 90 °C, preferably at a temperature of up to about 150 °C and a pressure difference of 50 bar.

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29. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said film layer is the innermost layer of said film layer and said polymer layer.

30. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said film layer is sandwiched between two polymer layers, preferably at least one

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FLEX PA0302 DK

23

of the polymer layers being bonded to the film layer, with a bonding that is stronger than the internal cohesion of said polymer layer.

31. A flexible pipe according to claim 30 wherein the innermost polymer layer of the two polymer layers is selected from the group consisting of polyolefins, such as polyethylene and poly propylene; polyamide, such as poly amide-imide, polyamide-11 (PA-11) and polyamide-12 (PA-12); polyimide (PI); polyurethanes; polyureas; polyesters; polyacetals; polyethers, such as polyether sulphone (PES); polyoxides; polysulfides, such as polyphenylene sulphide (PPS); polysulphones, such as polyarylsulphone (PAS); polyacrylates; polyethylene terephthalate (PET); polyether-ether-ketones (PEEK); polyvinyls; polyacrylonitrils; polyetherketoneketone (PEKK); copolymers of the preceding; fluorous polymers such as polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF), homopolymers and copolymers of vinylidene fluoride ("VF2 "), homopolymers and copolymers of trifluoroethylene ("VF3 "), copolymers and terpolymers comprising two or more different members selected from the group consisting of VF2, VF3, chlorotrifluoroethylene, tetrafluoroethylene, hexafluoropropene, and hexafluoroethylene.

32. A flexible pipe according to claim 31 wherein the innermost polymer layer of the two polymer layers being PVDF and the polymer layer on the in radial direction outermost of the two polymer layer is cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE).

33. A flexible pipe according to claim 31 wherein the innermost polymer layer of the two polymer layers is cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE).

34. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the film is in the form of a tape wound around and optionally bonded to an innermost polymer layer.

35. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims 1-33 wherein the film is in the form of a tape folded around and optionally bonded to an innermost polymer layer.

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FLEX PA0302 DK

24

36. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said film or said film with a primer comprises C atoms, the polymer preferably being a cross-linked polymer with bondings linking to the C atoms of the film.
- 6 37. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said pipe comprises one or more innermost unbonded armouring layers (carcass).
- 10 38. A flexible pipe according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said pipe comprises one or more unbonded armouring layers (outer armouring layers) on the outer side of the polymer layer bonded to said film layer, preferably an outer cover layer being placed around said outer armouring layers.
- 15 39. A method of producing a flexible unbonded pipe as defined in any one of the claims 1-38, said method comprising the steps of providing at least one polymer layer and at least one film layer and bonding said layers to each other.
- 20 40. A method according to claim 39 said method comprising the steps of
- 25 -providing an innermost polymer layer, preferably around a mandrel or an inner armour layer (carcass), more preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,
- providing a film layer around said innermost polymer layer, preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,
- 30 -providing a second polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and
- providing a bonding between at least one of said polymer layers and said film layer, said bonding preferably being provided by subjecting said at least one polymer layer to cross-linking.

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FLEX PA0302 DK

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41. A method according to claim 39 said method comprising the steps of

-providing a film layer around a mandrel or an inner armour layer (carcass), preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,

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-providing a polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and

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-providing a bonding between said polymer layers and the film, said bonding preferably being provided by cross-linking of the polymer layer.

42. A method according to claim 39 said method comprising the steps of

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- providing the innermost layered section of the flexible pipe comprising at least an innermost polymer layer and an armour layer on the outer side of said innermost polymer layer,

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-providing a film layer around said innermost layered section of the flexible pipe, preferably by extrusion, winding or wrapping,

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-providing an outer polymer layer around said film layer, preferably by extrusion, and

-providing a bonding between at least one of said polymer layers and the film, said bonding preferably being provided by subjecting said polymer layer to cross-linking.

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43. A method according to any one of the claims 39-42 wherein the film is treated by corona or by application of a primer for increasing bonding, said primer preferably being applied using CVD, spraying, dipping and/or rolling.

44. A method according to any one of the claims 39-43 wherein the film or a primer coated onto said film comprises C atoms.

FLEX PA0302 DK

26

45. A method according to any one of the claims 39-44 wherein at least one polymer layer is cross-linked after being applied in contact with the film.
- 5 46. A method according to any one of the claims 39-45 wherein the film is or comprises a metal tape with a primer, the primer preferably being selected from the group of latex primers, epoxy primers and acrylat/methacrylat primers.

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